# *AMENDMENT*

Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application with the following Listing of Claims.

***Listing of Claims***

1. ***(Currently Amended)*** A computer-based method for collecting dependency data, the method including:

collecting configuration data describing a first networked resource via a software agent executing on the first networked resource;

extracting, via the software agent, dependency data from the configuration data, the dependency data specifying either provider or consumer dependency relationships between the first networked resource and one or more other networked resources, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first networked resource will propagate to the one or more other networked resources, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the one or more other networked resources will propagate to the first networked resource; and

populating a repository with the dependency data, wherein the repository is stored separate from other configuration data collected by the software agent.

2. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 1, wherein the repository is stored on the first networked resource.

3. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 2, further including:

collecting dependency data from a plurality of networked resources including the first networked resource; and

storing the dependency data in a repository centralized within a distributed systems management environment, wherein the centralized repository is stored in the distributed systems management environment separately from other configuration data associated with the plurality of networked resources.

4. ***(Currently Amended)*** A computer-based method for communicating dependency data, including:

collecting configuration data describing a first managed device via an agent executing on the first managed device;

extracting, via the agent, dependency data from the configuration data, the dependency data specifying either provider or consumer dependency relationships between the first managed device and one or more other managed resources, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first managed device will propagate to the one or more other managed resources, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the one or more other managed resources will propagate to the first managed device;

generating a table that includes the extracted dependency data, wherein the table is stored separate from other configuration data associated with the first managed device that has been collected by the agent; and

offering access to the table, the access being offered via a dependency interface for a distributed systems management protocol on the agent.

5. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 4, where the distributed systems management protocol is an open standard.

6. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 4, where the distributed systems management protocol is SNMP.

7. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 5, wherein offering access includes a distributed systems management software application communicating across a network with the agent using the distributed systems management protocol.

8. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 7, wherein the agent communicates with a distributed systems management software application using the

distributed systems management protocol to raise a trap based on the dependency data included in the table.

9. ***(Currently Amended)*** A computer-based method for distributed systems management, including:

monitoring a first managed device with a first agent executing on the first managed device, wherein the first agent gathers dependency data describing either a provider or a consumer [[a]] dependency relationship between the first managed device and a second device, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first managed device will propagate to the second device, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the second device will propagate to the first managed device; and

initiating, by the first managed device, ~~starting~~ a second agent to monitor the second device based on the dependency data gathered by the first agent, wherein the second agent executes on the second device.

10. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 9, wherein the first managed device is managed by a distributed systems management software application and the second device is also managed by the distributed systems management software application at the time the dependency data is gathered by the first agent.

11. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 9, wherein the first managed device is managed by a distributed systems management software application and the second device is not being managed by the distributed systems management software application at the time the dependency data is gathered by the first agent.

12. ***(Currently Amended)*** A computer-based method for formatting dependency information for display, including:

providing a display area having a linear border,

selecting a root managed device residing in a distributed network to display at a root distance from the border; and

displaying a non-root managed device having either a provider or a consumer [[a]] dependency relationship with the root managed device, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the non-root managed device will propagate to root managed device, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the root managed device will propagate to the non-root managed device, and ~~where~~ the dependency relationship has a length of at least one, the displaying including indenting the representation of the non-root managed device a predetermined distance away from the border, greater than the root distance and dependent upon the length of the dependency relationship.

13. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 12, wherein displaying further includes displaying a plurality of non-root managed devices in a tabular layout ordered according to a breadth-first search of devices joined by direct dependency relationships, the search beginning with the root managed device.

14. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 13, wherein the breadth-first search is constrained to a predetermined depth.

15. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 12, wherein displaying further includes displaying a plurality of non-root managed devices in a tabular layout ordered according to a depth-first search of devices joined by direct dependency relationships, the search beginning with the root managed device.

16. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 15, wherein the depth-first search is constrained to a predetermined depth.

17. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 12, wherein the predetermined distance for any such non-root managed device in the display area is determined by multiplying the length times a base predetermined distance.

18. ***(Currently Amended)*** A computer-based method for collecting dependency data, the method including:

gathering configuration data associated with a plurality of networked resources via a plurality of software agents, such that a software agent runs on each networked resource in the plurality of networked resources;

extracting, via the plurality of software agents, dependency data from the gathered configuration data, the dependency data including data specifying either provider or consumer dependency relationships between the networked resources, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at a first networked resource will propagate to a second networked resource, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the second networked resource will propagate to the first networked resource; and

adding at least a portion of the ~~a~~ dependency data to a central repository managed by a manager application, wherein the portion of the dependency data added to the central repository is stored in the central repository separately from other configuration data.

19. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 18, wherein the networked resource are managed by the manager application.

20. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 19, wherein, based on the portion of the dependency data included in the central repository, the manager application initiates management of one or more additional resources not included in the plurality of networked resources.

21. ***(Previously Presented)*** The method of claim 20, wherein, the one or more additional resources that the manager application initiates management of are specified as having dependency relationships with the plurality of networked resources.

22. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 18, wherein manager application offers a client application access to the central repository, the access using a distributed systems management protocol.

23. ***(Original)*** The method of claim 22, wherein the distributed systems management protocol is SNMP.

24. ***(Currently Amended)*** An article comprising a machine-readable storage medium that stores executable instructions to collect dependency data, the instructions causing a machine to:

collect configuration data describing a first networked resource via a software agent executing on the first networked resource;

extract, via the software agent, dependency data from the configuration data, the dependency data specifying either a provider or a consumer [[a]] dependency relationship between the first networked resource and one or more other networked resources, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first networked resource will propagate to the one or more other networked resources, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the one or more other networked resources will propagate to the first networked resource; and

populate a repository with the dependency data, wherein the repository is stored separate from other configuration data collected by the software agent.

25. ***(Original)*** The article of claim 24, wherein the repository is stored on the first networked resource.

26. ***(Previously Presented)*** The article of claim 25, further including instructions causing the machine to:

collect dependency data from a plurality of networked resources including the first networked resource; and

store the dependency data in a repository centralized within a distributed systems management environment, wherein the centralized repository is stored in the distributed systems management environment separately from other configuration data associated with the plurality of networked resources.

27. ***(Currently Amended)*** An article comprising a machine-readable storage medium that stores executable instructions to communicate dependency data, the instructions causing a machine to:

collect configuration data describing a first managed device via an agent executing on the first managed device;

extract, via the agent, dependency data from the configuration data, the dependency data specifying either provider or consumer dependency relationships between the first managed device and one or more other managed resources, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first managed device will propagate to the one or more other managed resources, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the one or more other managed resources will propagate to the first managed device;

generate a table that includes the extracted dependency data, wherein the table is stored separate from other configuration data associated with the first managed device that has been collected by the agent; and

offer access to the table, the access being offered via a dependency interface for a distributed systems management protocol on the agent.

28. ***(Currently Amended)*** An article comprising a machine-readable storage medium that stores executable instructions to manage distributed systems, the instructions causing a machine to:

monitor a first managed device with a first agent executing on the first managed device, wherein the first agent gathers dependency data describing either a provider or a consumer dependency relationship between the first managed device and a second device, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the first managed device will propagate to the second device, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the second device will propagate to the first managed device; and

initiating, by the first managed device, ~~starting~~ a second agent to monitor the second device based on the dependency data gathered by the first agent, wherein the second agent executes on the second device.

29. ***(Currently Amended)*** An article comprising a machine-readable storage medium that stores executable instructions to format dependency information for display, the instructions causing a machine to:

provide a display area having a linear border;

select a root managed device residing in a distributed network to display at a root distance from the linear border; and

display a ~~not-root~~ non-root managed device having either a provider or a consumer [[a]] dependency relationship with the root managed device, wherein said provider dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the non-root managed device will propagate to the root managed device, and said consumer dependency relationship indicates that a problem at the root managed device will propagate to the non-root managed device, and ~~where~~ the dependency relationship has a length of at least one, the displaying including indenting the representation of the non-root managed device a predetermined distance away from the linear border, greater than the root distance and dependent upon the length of the dependency relationship.

30. ***(Original)*** The article of claim 29, wherein the instructions causing a machine to display further include displaying a plurality of non-root managed devices in a tabular layout ordered according to a breadth-first search of devices joined by direct dependency relationships, the search beginning with the root managed device.

31. ***(Original)*** The article of claim 29, wherein the instructions causing a machine to display further include displaying a plurality of non-root managed devices in a tabular layout ordered according to a depth-first search of devices joined by direct dependency relationships, the search beginning with the root managed device.